

# Enviroschools Te Tai Poutini - West Coast Report

for Buller District Council  
May 2023

Prepared by Lauren Kelley,  
Enviroschools Regional Coordinator & Buller Facilitator



In partnership with:



## Overview

Enviroschools is a holistic approach to the development of resilient and sustainable communities. The complex environmental, social, cultural and economic challenges facing us today call for a collaborative response. Enviroschools operates nationwide and has a large network of over 1,500 schools and early childhood centres. The network is supported by Toimata Foundation and around 90 regional partners that includes 80% of councils.

Over the past three years, Buller schools have worked in a challenging environment with Covid-19, lockdowns, flooding and staff illness and shortages. But Enviroschools West Coast adapted, supporting teachers through Zoom and using the time to refresh programmes and plan. This year there are still some challenges but we are easing back into normality, able to meet in-person, and supporting schools to re-energize their Enviroschools journey.

Zoe Watson has moved on to a new role with Environment Canterbury, where she is supporting Enviroschools on the east coast, and we have had three new staff come on board for the West Coast Region. Lauren Kelley will be your key contact as the new Regional Coordinator and Facilitator for Buller. Lauren previously worked as a Community Ranger for DOC in Greymouth where she supported schools' and community groups' engagement with the environment and conservation as well as working with councils on a variety of processes and projects. Laura Neale is our new Facilitator for Grey and Westland districts and Tayla Nelson-Tūhuru is in a brand new role being piloted this year which is focussed on supporting Enviroschools' relationships with local iwi and Te Ao Māori (the Māori world).

West Coast Enviroschools and Toimata Foundation thank Buller District Council for your financial support of the Enviroschools Programme over the past three years. The current agreement ends on 30 June 2023 and we look forward to renewing our agreement so we can continue this mahi together.

## Current Situation

### West Coast Region

There are 19 Enviroschools on the West Coast, 6 in Buller, 5 in Grey, and 8 in Westland. This is 37% of the total schools and early childhood centres in the region. This network is supported by four collaborators and the following regional partners:



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



In most regions, the Regional Coordination role is held by the Regional/Unitary Council. As the West Coast Regional Council is currently not involved, Toimata are investing in the region directly from their national funding from Central Government (Ministry for the Environment).

## Buller District

In the 2022/23 year there were 6 Enviroschools in the Buller District:

- **Karamea Area School**
- **Granity School**
- **St Canice's School**
- **Sacred Heart School**
- **Reefton Area School**
- **Reefton Early Learning Centre**

6 Enviroschools

5 of the total 9 schools (56%)

1 of the total 4 early childhood centres (25%)

Funding received 2022/23 \$29,000 + GST

Funding 2023/24 To be confirmed through agreement renewal

## Ways in which Enviroschools is contributing to BDC Community Outcomes

- Developing **sustainable, resilient and connected communities** – Enviroschools Kaupapa
- Supporting tamariki/students to develop a **sense of belonging** with local places
- **Empowering children and young people** to participate in a meaningful way in taking action for a sustainable future
- Supporting integration of **Te Ao Māori, tikanga, and concepts**
- **Working with adults** – Kaiako, school management, community members – to develop their knowledge of sustainability and integrate it into how they undertake their roles. It is **lifelong learning** in action
- **Fostering creativity** by people exploring and envisaging what a resilient and vibrant sustainable world could be

### Environmental sustainability actions:



100%  
Zero Waste



97%  
Kai/food  
production



92%  
Kai/food  
distribution



92%  
Creative projects  
in the landscape



88%  
Biodiversity  
and biosecurity



83%  
Water health  
and conservation



67%  
Energy!



63%  
Ecological  
Building

### Cultural, Social and Economic sustainability actions:



99%  
Cultural  
sustainability



89%  
Social  
sustainability



75%  
Economic  
sustainability



\* Percentages are the total % of participants who are taking one or more actions in the area  
Source: 2017 Enviroschools Nationwide Census

## Highlights – Enthusiasm for Enviroschools kaupapa and weaving the guiding principles into school life

Karamea Area School – growing their sustainability journey. As Buller’s newest Enviroschool, KAS has been busy this year. Highlights include...

- Building raised beds for veggie gardening
- Making plans to set up a worm farm and use the school’s compost in the garden
- Establishing their 2023 Envirogroup/Steering Group
- Building on their relationship with Clean Streams Karamea to learn about and help with riparian planting
- Integrating Enviroschools principles and community relationships into their long term planning



KAS students building raised garden beds

St Canice’s School – getting to know the ngahere on the Millenium Track, with support from DOC.

Sacred Heart School – celebrated achieving Bronze, Sept 2022. Through a reflection process, teachers and students agreed they are well underway toward building an understanding of their environment and have taken sustainability actions with their community.

*“We have a strong culture at our school which ensures students have a voice in all that happens. We have many opportunities at our school where the students’ voice has a strong impact on the direction our school takes. All students at our school are part of our enviroschools group.”*

- Excerpt from Sacred Heart’s Bronze reflection statement

Reefton Area School – building an understanding of Te Ao Māori. Highlights include...

- Establishing eight pou on school grounds with support from Creative New Zealand and master carver, Tony Manuel
- Working toward completion of a harakeke garden and school bike track

Waste Minimisation continues to be a focus

- Karamea Area School conducted a **waste audit** in Term 1 which led to a goal of reducing the school’s waste by 80% this year. They continue to build a school culture of recycling and increasing use of their new recycling station
- **Packaging waste has been reduced by 80% at Reefton Area School** through partnering with the Healthy School Lunches programme.



### Other Highlights

- **All Buller Enviroschools** continue to incorporate **sustainability, Te Ao Māori and respect for diversity** into their teaching and actions.
- **Whakawhanaungatanga** – new Enviroschools regional coordinator and facilitator, Lauren Kelley has been getting to know the Buller schools with 4 in-person meetings and a Zoom.
- **The Reefton Enviroschools Cluster** (All three of Reefton’s kura) are making plans to re-start once-a-term meetings and collaborate on shared ideas that benefit students from early childhood through to year 13.

### Recruiting a New Enviroschool

Due to an increase in funding from BDC, we are signing up a new Enviroschool in Buller this year.

The recruitment process will involve gauging commitment to the Enviroschools kaupapa; presentation at staff meetings to share the process, benefits, resources and level of commitment required; signing an agreement; and exploring the first steps of the Enviroschools journey together, including professional development for staff.

We have already had some discussions and will let BDC know as soon as the new school is on board.



*Karamea Area School students conducting a waste audit*

### Next Steps

- Recruiting a new Enviroschool in Buller and supporting them to start their journey.
- Planning a cluster meeting in Reefton each term.
- Conducting waste audits and supporting schools with waste minimization initiatives.
- Staying connected with the Buller Enviroschools community and BDC to support sustainability and collaboration.



*St Canice’s students exploring plants and insects of the Millennium Track*

